

Fact Sheet for the Draft General Permit For Biosolids Management

Introduction

The Department of Ecology (Ecology) is issuing a draft General Permit for Biosolids Management (general permit) for review and comment. The general permit is an updated version of the expiring general permit that was issued in June 2005. The general permit incorporates changes Ecology made to the state biosolids rule ([Chapter 173-308 WAC](#), *Biosolids Management*) in June 2007.

Legal Basis

Ecology was authorized to develop a state biosolids program (including the general permit) by [Chapter 70.95J RCW](#), *Municipal Sewage Sludge-Biosolids*. The purpose of [Chapter 173-308 WAC](#) is to maximize beneficial use of biosolids while protecting human health and the environment. The purpose of the general permit is to implement the requirements of [Chapter 173-308 WAC](#).

Facility and Activity Types

The state biosolids program regulates biosolids (including septage) applied to the land, biosolids sold or given away in a bag or other container, biosolids being stored, biosolids transferred from one facility to another, and sewage sludge disposed in a municipal solid waste landfill.

The general permit will apply to all treatment works treating domestic sewage in the state. The majority of these facilities are publicly owned wastewater treatment plants. Other types of facilities subject to the general permit include privately owned wastewater treatment plants that treat only domestic sewage, composting facilities that treat biosolids as a feedstock, biosolids beneficial use facilities, and septage management facilities.

Geographical Coverage

The general permit is applicable within the boundaries of the State of Washington, including state and federal lands. It does not apply to lands within the boundaries of Indian reservations or lands outside of Indian reservations that are held in trust by the federal government for a tribe.

Criteria for Providing Coverage

Coverage under the general permit will be provided in two phases: 1) provisional approval, and 2) final approval. "Provisional" approval is obtained by submitting a complete permit application as defined in the general permit. Under provisional approval, a facility is authorized to carry out biosolids management activities according to the conditions of the general permit, the state biosolids rule, and any submitted plans. "Final" approval is issued after a full Ecology review of the permit application and operating practices. In issuing final approval, Ecology may impose "additional or more stringent" conditions deemed necessary to ensure proper biosolids management.

Facilities Proposed to be Covered

Three hundred seventy-nine (379) facilities have stated they will apply for coverage under the general permit. A list of the facilities is available at:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/biosolids/pdf/FacilitiesSubmitted.pdf> or by requesting from the person listed below.

Information Required in a Permit Application

Facilities applying for coverage under the general permit must submit a complete permit application as defined in the general permit. A complete permit application includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- A completed Application for Coverage.
- A vicinity map of the facility.
- A vicinity map of any associated treatment or storage facilities.
- A treatment facility schematic.
- Confirmation that the SEPA requirements have been met.
- Confirmation that the public notice requirements have been met if appropriate.
- Land application plans if appropriate.
- Monitoring data if appropriate.
- A biosolids sampling plan if appropriate.
- A contingency plan for exceptional quality biosolids if appropriate.
- A temporary disposal plan if appropriate.
- A spill prevention/response plan if appropriate.

Characteristics of Facilities

Frequency of Biosolids Production and Management

Facilities operating under the general permit have varying rates of biosolids production and management. Some produce and manage biosolids year-round. Others may produce but not manage biosolids for periods ranging from one to several years. Still others (for example, some lagoon facilities) may not technically produce biosolids until removal of solids occurs, and this may occur as infrequently as every 20 or more years.

Quantity

Biosolids production is expressed on a dry ton basis. According to data collected from the 2008 Annual Biosolids Reports, 371 facilities produced approximately 100,000 dry tons of biosolids. Of that total, approximately 83% of the biosolids were land applied; about 16% were incinerated; and <1% were disposed in a landfill.

Pollutants of Concern

Nine pollutants of concern are regulated under the state (and federal) biosolids program: arsenic, cadmium, copper, lead, mercury, molybdenum, nickel, selenium, and zinc. In addition, the program regulates nitrogen through agronomic rate management. Among these potential pollutants, copper, molybdenum, and zinc are plant micronutrients, and nitrogen is a plant macronutrient. The state has adopted federal standards for all regulated pollutants. Maximum pollutant limits are established in [WAC 173-308-160](#) Table 1. Lower pollutant limits are established in [WAC 173-308-160](#) Table 3; meeting this

standard eliminates the need to track cumulative pollutant loadings on sites where biosolids are applied. The great majority of biosolids produced in the state fall well below the allowable concentrations in [WAC 173-308-160](#) Table 3. Average pollutant concentrations in Washington biosolids in 2008 were:

Pollutant	Parts per million
Arsenic	7.7
Cadmium	3.0
Copper	422.0
Lead	35.0
Mercury	2.1
Molybdenum	9.9
Nickel	20.4
Selenium	9.4
Zinc	822.5

Standards and Limitations

State standards are the same as federal standards and can be found in [Chapter 173-308 WAC](#). In summary, biosolids must meet standards for pollutant limits, pathogen reduction, and vector attraction reduction appropriate to the intended end use. Biosolids destined for use in situations where future exposures are uncontrolled (for example lawns, home gardens, golf courses, top soils, etc.) must meet higher standards than biosolids that are applied to areas where access and crop harvest restrictions can be put in place.

General Conditions

The general permit implements the conditions of [Chapter 173-308 WAC](#) and related federal biosolids law and regulations. The permit (and rule) provides for the possibility of imposing additional or more stringent standards as a condition of final approval of coverage on a case-by-case basis.

Compliance Schedules

A schedule may be established leading to compliance with requirements of the general permit and [Chapter 173-308 WAC](#). A compliance schedule may not extend deadlines established under the [Clean Water Act](#) or [Chapter 70.95J RCW](#). Compliance schedules must be established in accordance with the requirements of [WAC 173-308-310\(16\)](#).

Procedures for Finalizing the General Permit

There will be a 30-day comment period for the draft general permit. Comments on the draft general permit will be accepted in writing or at the public hearing. All comments received by 6:00PM on June 22, 2010, will be considered during the development of a final general permit. A summary of responses to comments received will be prepared and made available. Ecology anticipates issuing a final general permit by August 1, 2010. Following issuance, there will be a 30-day appeal period for the final general permit before it becomes effective.

Time and Place of Public Hearing

One public hearing will be held on the draft general permit. The public hearing will occur at 1301 N. Dolarway Road, Ellensburg, WA 98926 on June 22, 2010, from 4:00PM–6:00PM.

Economic Impact Analysis Summary

In accordance with the requirements in [WAC 173-308-90005\(4\)](#), an Economic Impact Analysis (EIA) was conducted on the draft general permit to assess whether it may have a disproportionate economic impact on small businesses relative to large businesses. Ecology found that the draft general permit would not have a disproportionate impact on small businesses. The EIA may be obtained from: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/biosolids/GeneralPermit.html> or by requesting from the person listed below.

Obtaining Copies of this Fact Sheet

This fact sheet may be obtained from: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/biosolids/GeneralPermit.html> or by requesting from the person listed below.

Contact for Comments, Questions, Requests
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